



H.Con.Res. 200 – Expressing the sense of Congress regarding the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Con.Res. 200 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Peter King (R-NY) on August 2, 2007. The Committee on Foreign Affairs agreed to seek consideration under suspension of the rules for H.Con.Res. 200, as amended, by unanimous consent on September 26, 2007.

H.Con.Res. 200 is expected to be considered on the floor on October 2, 2007.

SUMMARY

H.Con.Res. 200 states that it is the sense of Congress that United States policy should continue to call upon:

- The military regime in Burma:
 - To immediately and unconditionally release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other detained political prisoners and prisoners of conscience;
 - To immediately cease attacks against ethnic minority civilians; and
 - To immediately begin a meaningful process of tripartite dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD, and Burma's ethnic nationalities; and
- The People's Republic of China and other countries that provide political and economic support to Burma's military junta to utilize their position and influence to:
 - Urge Burma's military generals to immediately release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners; and
 - End their attacks on ethnic minority civilians and begin a meaningful process of genuine national reconciliation with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD, and Burma's ethnic nationalities.
- Further, Congress urges the United Nations Security Council to immediately consider and take appropriate action to respond to the growing threat the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) poses in Burma, expresses support for the restoration of democracy in

Burma and expresses the need for freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press to be guaranteed for all Burmese citizens.

BACKGROUND

In 1988, the Burmese military assumed control of Burma and established rule through a military junta called the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), and changed the name of the country to Myanmar. The United States still officially refers to the country as Burma and the State Department describes Burma as “an underdeveloped agrarian country ruled by an authoritarian military regime. The country's government suppresses all expression of opposition to its rule.”

In May of 1990, multiparty elections were held in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) party won, although Burma's ruling military refused to allow the NLD's party's leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to assume the office of Prime Minister and subsequently placed her under house arrest. For her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released in July 1995, and was once again placed under house arrest in September 2000. Following a second release, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and several of her followers were attacked by a government-sponsored mob on May 6, 2002, and she was then imprisoned at Insein Prison in Yangon, Burma.

On May 16, 2007, more than 50 world leaders released a letter demanding the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a demand repeated by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 14 United Nations human rights experts, the European Union, the United States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the foreign ministers of three ASEAN member states. However, her detention was extended on May 27, 2007.

On September 30, 2006, the United Nations Security Council officially included Burma on its agenda for the first time. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) denounced the ruling military regime of Burma on June 22, 2007, citing the use of detainees as porters for the armed forces and the systematic abuse and murder of both detainees and civilians. The ICRC stated that civilians, especially those residing near the Thai-Burma border, have been subjected to abuse such as destruction of their food supply and forced unpaid manual labor.

Currently in the News:

The ruling junta has violently suppressed weeks of protests held in cities throughout Burma. From an October 1, 2007 Associated Press Report: “Protests against the government ignited Aug. 19 after it hiked fuel prices, but public anger ballooned into mass demonstrations led by Buddhist monks against 45 years of military dictatorship.

Soldiers responded last week by shooting at unarmed demonstrators. The government says 10 people were killed, but dissident groups say anywhere from several dozen to as many as 200 died in the crackdown.

Opposition groups also say several thousand people were arrested, including many monks who were dragged out of their monasteries and locked up. Many demonstrators were reported held in makeshift prisons at old factories, a race track and universities around Yangon. It was impossible to independently verify the reports in the tightly controlled nation.” (October 1, 2007, AP: [Myanmar's Junta Stalls U.N. Envoy Again](#))

COST

A cost estimate was not available from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) at the time of publication.

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